



EDUCATION COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING

MARCH 15, 2013

Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and esteemed members of the Education Committee. My name is Rae Ann Knopf, and I am the executive director of the Connecticut Council for Education Reform (CCER). CCER is a statewide non-profit 501(c)(3) organization formed in 2011. I represent business and civic leaders who support comprehensive education reform efforts designed to close the achievement gap and raise academic outcomes for all students.

I am here today to testify on Senate Bill 1097, *An Act Concerning Revisions to the Education Reform Act of 2012*. Connecticut passed landmark education reform last year, and it happened with strong support from Democrats and Republicans. Any attempt to delay the implementation of any portion of that law will lessen the state's commitment to providing world-class educational opportunities to all of Connecticut's children.

Therefore, CCER is opposed to S.B. 1097 because its provisions would:

1. Delay full implementation of the new educator evaluation and support system, overriding a collaboratively created phase-in process;
2. Mandate the formation of professional development and evaluation committees, a process which overrides local authority in their ability to develop a model that uniquely addresses local need;
3. Defer decisions about ineffective educators; and
4. Postpone the implementation of K-3 literacy initiatives.

The reason CCER opposes these provisions is because we recognize that, in order to succeed in school, every child needs an effective teacher every year. In their research about the highest achieving schools in the world, McKinsey and Company found that "the top-performing school systems recognize that the only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction."¹ When fully implemented, one of last year's pillars of education reform, the educator evaluation and support system, will give our schools the infrastructure to consistently acknowledge classroom excellence and to identify areas of necessary improvement quickly so all educators have a greater chance at success. If educators succeed, so do Connecticut's children.

However, the bill before you attempts to unnecessarily delay the implementation of the educator evaluation and support system. While we recognize district capacity for implementation of this new system varies, nearly 25% of Connecticut school districts are already moving to revamp their evaluation system to incorporate new guidelines established by the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) and the State Board of Education. This year, there are ten districts piloting the State Board of Education approved evaluation model. The Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut is monitoring these programs and providing reports to inform next year's statewide implementation efforts. Moreover, a number of other districts have initiated modified evaluation models and support programs incorporating state guidelines as defined last year.

¹ McKinsey and Company, *How the Best Schools in the World Come Out on Top*, 2007. Retrieved from: http://mckinseyonsociety.com/downloads/reports/Education/Worlds_School_Systems_Final.pdf

So, while the process of implementing this new system may be challenging, it is certainly doable. Nonetheless, recognizing district capacity to implement such complex and comprehensive change is variable, the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) was reconvened and reached consensus on providing flexibility regarding the roll-out of the new educator evaluation system. The State Board of Education (SBOE) embraced the modification of the teacher evaluation roll-out on February 6, 2013, and Commissioner Pryor communicated the parameters of this flexibility to education leaders around the state in a memo dated February 22, 2013 (Appendix I). We fully support the differential implementation options as defined by this plan. Unfortunately, this bill would obviate the collaborative agreement between PEAC and the SBOE, which created a process that is both flexible and responsive to the needs of individual school districts. This collaboratively developed phase-in process permits districts to choose one of the following three "bridge" scenarios:

- a. All teachers and administrators in one-third of schools;
- b. Classroom teachers and administrators in half of schools; or
- c. At least one-third of all certified staff using a committee process that includes teachers, for development.²

This bill also mandates the manner in which local teacher evaluation models are developed by requiring a newly established professional development and evaluation committee to develop the model in lieu of the local board of education. As part of the flexible roll-out agreed to by PEAC and the SBOE (see Appendix II), there is already an option for boards of education to use a committee driven process that includes educators and others to help design an alternative roll-out schedule. Mandating another method in statute (as this bill would do) would severely limit the ability of both PEAC and the SBOE to expeditiously and flexibly respond to local school district concerns, and would impede the ability of local boards of education to exercise appropriate authority and responsibility in developing the new evaluation model.

The bill before you would also defer decisions about ineffective educators until school year 2015-16. That means Connecticut teachers, principals and children would go yet another year without the necessary feedback and supports for raising achievement and closing learning gaps. We cannot ask the children of our state to sacrifice another year of education. They cannot afford it, and neither can we.

Another critical element of last year's education reform bill was K-3 literacy, key components of which would be postponed in this bill. There is a vital need for these programs since, on last year's third grade reading Connecticut Mastery Tests, over forty percent of children did not reach goal levels.³ If K-3 literacy programs are further delayed, the approximately 161,000⁴ children in those grades will miss another year. They will waste more time during which their reading skills could have been assessed and their deficiencies addressed. That is another year Connecticut children with reading difficulties will never get back.

Members of the Education Committee, we at CCER urge you to consider the serious implications of this bill in its ability to delay, defer and pre-empt promising advances made during last year's legislative session.

² SEED, retrieved from: http://www.connecticutseed.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/PEAC_Flow_Chart_Eval_Rollout.pdf

³ Retrieved from CT Reports: <http://solutions1.emetric.net/cmtpublic/CMTCode/Report.aspx?data=8F9E92802D8160E990BA20141585EC6>

⁴ State Department of Education, Data Tables from 2011, Retrieved from http://sdeportal.ct.gov/Cedar/WEB/ct_report/EnrollmentDTViewer.aspx

APPENDIX I-COMMISSIONER STEFAN PRYOR'S LETTER TO STAKEHOLDERS
ABOUT PHASE-IN OF EDUCATOR EVALUATION PROCESS

TO:

Superintendents of Schools
Chairs, Boards of Education
American Federation of Teachers-CT (AFT-CT)
Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education (CAACE)
Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)
Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS)
Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS)
Connecticut Education Association (CEA)
Connecticut Federation of School Administrators (AFSA-AFL-CIO)

FROM: Stefan Pryor, Commissioner of Education

DATE: February 22, 2013

SUBJECT: Greater District Flexibility Surrounding Statewide Implementation of Connecticut's Educator Evaluation and Support System for 2013

In response to concerns expressed by you, your colleagues, and other stakeholders regarding the implementation of the new educator evaluation and support system in your districts in the coming academic year, we have been working to increase flexibility and decrease burden associated with this implementation.

On Wednesday, February 6, 2013, after consideration of feedback from stakeholders including superintendents, education associations, and Connecticut's teachers' unions the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted a modified implementation plan for rollout of Connecticut's Educator Evaluation and Support System for the 2013-14 school year. This plan reflects the consensus opinion reached by the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) on February 4, 2013.

The Council was reconvened to review feedback regarding the pilot of the state model, Connecticut's System for Educator Evaluation and Support (SEED), gathered from the Neag implementation study and other sources, and to discuss options for statewide rollout scheduled by statute to begin next school year.

This "Bridge Year" implementation plan incorporates the feedback of educational stakeholders throughout the state and was developed collaboratively by the members of PEAC. The Implementation Plan for the 2013-14 "Bridge Year" is as follows:

Existing and Continuing Assumption: Implementation of the Whole Model

The existing and continuing assumption of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is that districts across the state will implement the whole model, consisting of all components of both teacher and administrator evaluation, as outlined in the Guidelines for Connecticut's Educator Evaluation and Support System, district-wide.

However, those districts that choose not to implement the whole model district-wide with all certified staff during the 2013-14 school year have the following flexibility options available for consideration as they build towards full implementation in 2014-15:

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Preferred Alternative Approach

Whole model, in at least 1/3 of schools, all certified teachers and administrators within those schools.

Additional Alternative Approaches

- Whole model,
50% of schools, classroom teachers only and administrators within those schools;
or
- Other locally-determined options.

NOTE: Those districts that choose an alternative approach must convene a committee that shall consist of representatives of local bargaining unit(s) and superintendents' representatives. In making a final determination about an alternative approach, it is important to note that the alternative approach must (1) involve implementation of the whole model; and (2) represent a minimum of 1/3 of the district's certified staff, including administrators. Recommendations of this committee will be forwarded by the superintendent to the local board of education. The SDE will look for evidence of meaningful committee process in reviewing a submitted plan.

NOTE: Per statute, the superintendent of each local or regional board of education shall [continuously] annually evaluate or cause to be evaluated each teacher in accordance with guidelines established by the State Board of Education. For purposes of this section, the term "teacher" shall include each professional employee of a board of education, below the rank of superintendent, who holds a certificate or permit issued by the State Board of Education (Sec. 23, 24 of P.A. 12-2). Therefore, those not being evaluated under the new evaluation system must be evaluated under the district's existing evaluation plan.

Superintendents, on behalf of their Boards of Education, must submit to the CSDE a decision regarding their implementation plan for the 2013-14 school year by April 15, 2013, for review and approval. The district's plan must meet requirements as outlined in the "core requirements" of the Guidelines. A rubric for both teacher and administrator evaluation is available for use by districts to assist in the development of their plans and to ensure alignment to the "core requirements."

The rubrics, as well as many additional resources, can be located at www.connecticutseed.org. The State recognizes that there are costs associated with implementation and intends to provide districts both technical and financial assistance to help offset some of these costs. Additional information will be provided in follow-up correspondence. Finally, as a result of additional challenges associated with implementation in special settings, implementation of Connecticut's Educator Evaluation and Support System will occur in the following settings in 2014-15:

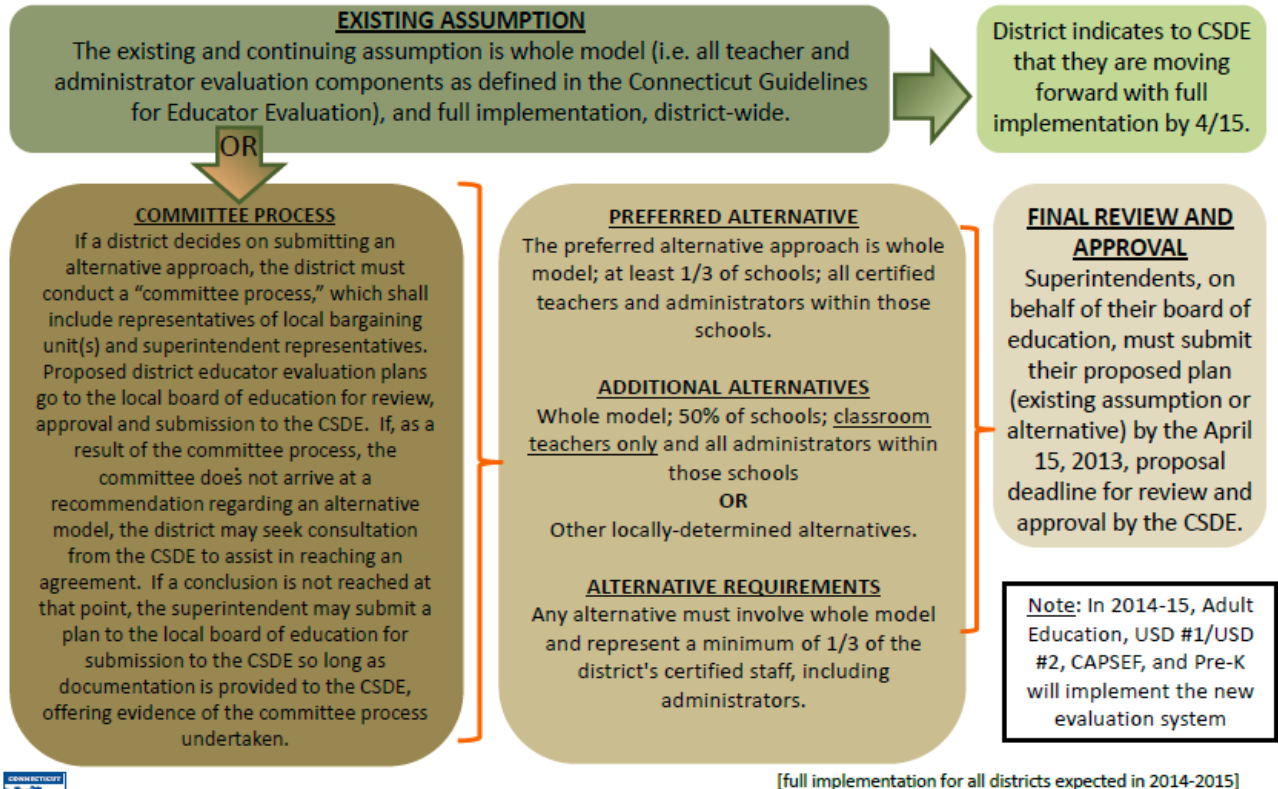
- Unified School District #1 (U.S.D. #1);
- Unified School District #2 (U.S.D. #2);
- Connecticut Association of Private Special Education Facilities (CAPSEF);
- Adult Education; and
- Pre-K.

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As you begin to consider the most appropriate course of action for your district, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Talent Office team at the CSDE. Additionally, consultants at the Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) and the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) are prepared to provide technical assistance as you continue to work towards implementation in 2013-14. For further information regarding this mailing, please contact Dr. Sarah Barzee, Interim Chief Talent Officer, at 860-713-6848, or via email at sarah.barzee@ct.gov

Retrieved from: <http://blogcea.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/educator-evaluation-and-support-system-2013-14.pdf>

SBE RESOLUTION FOR ROLLOUT OF EDUCATOR EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEM: 2013-2014 SCHOOL YEAR



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[full implementation for all districts expected in 2014-2015]

updated February 19, 2013

Connecticut State Board of Education, SEED, retrieved from: http://www.connecticutseed.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/PEAC_Flow_Chart_Eval_Rollout.pdf

APPENDIX III- ORIGINAL SCHEDULE OF EDUCATOR EVALUATION PROGRAM

Last year, Public Acts 12-116 and 12-2 (June Special Session) established an implementation schedule for the new teacher evaluation program. For the first year (school year 2012-13), there would be a pilot roll-out; full implementation would be in school year 2013-14. The following ten districts/collaborations requested to be included as pilots this year:

- 1) Bethany
- 2) Branford
- 3) Bridgeport
- 4) Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)
- 5) Columbia, Eastford, Franklin, and Sterling
- 6) Litchfield and Region 6
- 7) Norwalk
- 8) Waterford
- 9) Windham
- 10) Windsor

Retrieved from Governor Malloy's Press Release of June 4, 2012
<http://www.governor.ct.gov/malloy/cwp/view.asp?Q=505420&A=4010>

The Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut is evaluating the pilot programs and providing periodic feedback with a final report due on January 1, 2014. The State Department of Education has committed to consider adjustments to their evaluation model (SEED) based on UCONN's recommendations.⁵

Neag's January, 2013 evaluation of the pilot programs included both positive and negative observations. On the positive side, educators were generally supportive about the new evaluation process and the opportunity for them to be observed more frequently in their classrooms.⁶ The educators also thought they could have benefitted from a longer implementation process with more information available.⁷

On February 4, 2013, Neag presented this report to the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC). At the same meeting, the State Department of Education presented its recommendations to provide a flexible "bridge" year option (in school year 2013-14) for school districts that believed more time was needed before full implementation.⁸ For those school districts that would not be ready for full implementation next year, they could choose one of three "bridge" year scenarios; implementation could be in:

- d. One-third of schools and for all teachers and administrators in those schools or
- e. Half of the schools with classroom teachers only and administrators in those schools or
- f. An alternative way but which included at least one-third of all certified staff (this would have to include a committee process which included teachers).⁹

PEAC reached consensus on the teacher evaluation flexibility (the "bridge" year) model on February 4, 2013. The State Board of Education (SBOE) embraced the modification of the teacher evaluation rollout on February 6, 2013.

⁵ SEED FAQs, Retrieved from: http://www.connecticutseed.org/?page_id=453

⁶ Donaldson, Morgan, et al.; *SDE Implementation in the Pilot Districts, Progress to Date*, Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut, January, 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.connecticutseed.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/PEAC_Meeting_2-4-2013_w_Neag.pdf

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The 10 pilot districts/collaborations would continue to move forward as well as other districts which had planned on full implementation (all schools, all certified staff) in school year 2013-14.

⁹ SEED, retrieved from: http://www.connecticutseed.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/PEAC_Flow_Chart_Eval_Rollout.pdf

APPENDIX V-OTHER STATE'S EXPERIENCE WITH EDUCATOR EVALUATION PROGRAMS

Other states have successfully used or are in the process of using a gradual roll-out of their new teacher evaluation programs including:

- 1) Colorado- two years of pilots with a third year (school year 2013-14) for full implementation¹⁰
- 2) New Jersey- two years of increasing numbers of pilot districts with a third year (school year 2013-14) for full implementation¹¹
- 3) Pennsylvania- three years of increasing numbers of pilots with full implementation in school year 2013-14¹²
- 4) Tennessee-one pilot year with full implementation in school year 2011-12¹³
- 5) Delaware- one pilot year with full implementation in school year 2012-13¹⁴
- 6) New Hampshire-two years of increasing numbers of pilot districts with a third year (school year 2014-15) for full implementation¹⁵

¹⁰ McGuinn, Patrick, *State of Teacher Evaluation Reform*, Center for American Progress, November 2012, retrieved from http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/McGuinn_TheStateofEvaluation-INTRO.pdf

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Barry, Virginia, *New Hampshire's Model Teacher Evaluation System*, New Hampshire Department of Education, June 26, 2012, retrieved from <http://legisweb.state.nh.us/InterimCommittee/2012/NHModel.pdf>